

In a sermon delivered at the nondenominational People's Church in New York City, Dixon offered "A Friendly Warning to the Negro." Dixon declared, "The negro in American is now entering the gravest crises of his life as a race. If he is worthy he will survive. If he is not, he will be ground into powder."⁴¹ He placed southern African Americans in two categories: demagogues such as Alexander Manly and sensible leaders such as Booker T. Washington. According to Dixon, the African American community must withdraw from politics and banish men like Manly in order to cultivate relationships with their white benefactors. Commenting on the political revolution in North Carolina in 1898, Dixon declared that the state, but particularly Wilmington, would no longer live under Negro rule, characterized by "chaos, corruption, anarchy."⁴² In the event that blacks could not accept this outcome, Dixon recommended that they migrate to the North, the western territories, or one of the newly acquired territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific.⁴³

Dixon believed that Wilmington represented a critical moment in the nation's history. In a letter to Alfred Moore Waddell's widow, Gabrielle DeRosset Waddell, Dixon wrote of his admiration of the former mayor of Wilmington and assured the widow that her husband and the "Wilmington revolutionists did a very important work in the preservation of our civilization."⁴⁴ Dixon envisioned a white America, free from the taint of black blood and prepared to fulfill its imperialist "mission." In search of a larger audience, he began writing novels. His fictional treatment of the riot in *The Leopard's Spots* articulated this vision.

The Leopard's Spots tells the story of Charlie Gaston, son of a fallen Confederate soldier, who wanders through postbellum North Carolina under the guidance of Reverend John Durham. The minister articulates the sermons on race that Dixon delivered in New York City in the late 1890s. Durham regularly advises Gaston that America will either be Anglo Saxon or mulatto; this theory presupposes that, given the ballot and political offices, the black man will desire white women. The only possible result of this situation will be a mongrel race of Americans. Contrary to Chesnutt, Dixon believed that the color line must be preserved at all costs. Gaston articulates his mentor's lessons into a public policy which states that African American men must accept a subordinate position in society and withdraw from politics or leave the country.⁴⁵

Gaston visits Independence, North Carolina, the setting for Dixon's fictionalized account of the Wilmington Race Riot, to pay his respects to a regiment returning from the Spanish-American War. During his visit, a white man beats a black man to death for "jostling" his white female companion in a sidewalk encounter. The Fusion government blames Gaston for creating

the British Isles, where it spawned democratic institutions that were carried across the Atlantic to the American colonies. Adams's germ theory provided a scientific foundation for the racial theories that Dixon formulated in the late 1890s. The "biological" evidence supported his belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority and the foolishness of the postbellum political "experiment" involving African Americans. See James T. Rostar, "Johns Hopkins University and the Teutonic Germ," *North Carolina Literary Review* 2 (Spring 1994), pg. 92.

⁴¹ Thomas Dixon, *Dixon's Sermons, Delivered in the Grand Opera House, New York, 1898-1899* (New York: F.L. Bussey, 1899), pg. 112, 114.

⁴² Dixon, *Dixon's Sermons*, pg. 117-118.

⁴³ Dixon, *Dixon's Sermons*, pg. 119.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pg. 136.

⁴⁵ Thomas Dixon, *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865-1900* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1902; reprinted Salon Publishing Company, Norborne, Missouri, n.d.), pg. 435-448.